

California Department of Veterans Affairs



CAL-VET LOANS – VETERANS HOMES – VETERANS SERVICES – WOMEN VETERANS
VETERANS MEMORIAL – VETS LICENSE PLATES

NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Legislative & Public Affairs Office
Andrew Kotch 916-653-2192/316-2641(cell)

DEPARTMENT TAKES AGGRESSIVE ACTION IN RECENT BARSTOW CITATION BY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

RESTRUCTURING OF VETERANS HOMES DIVISION SEEN AS POSITIVE DIRECTION FOR IMPROVED HEALTHCARE AT STATE VETERANS HOMES

SACRAMENTO, CA.- February 3, 2003 – The California Department of Veterans Affairs, in response to a recent citation issued to the Barstow Veterans Home, has already begun taking decisive actions to remedy this serious matter.

“The death of a resident at the Barstow Veterans Home has caused us great concern as to the healthcare procedures followed at the Home,” commented Secretary K. Maurice Johannessen. “We are deeply saddened by the loss of the resident. This loss however, hardens my resolve not only to rectify the problem at Barstow, but initiate sweeping changes throughout the Veterans Homes Division that will prevent such reoccurrences and bring about the highest quality of healthcare for our veterans,” he added.

The Department of Veterans Affairs began taking aggressive actions to address the situation immediately after the incident occurred. In addition to the reviews and re-training already completed, disciplinary actions ranging from reprimand to termination are being considered. Physicians involved have also been removed from patient contact pending the conclusion of the investigation.

After the death of the resident the following actions were implemented at Barstow.

- Dec. 6, 2002 – pharmacy consultant conducted a complete Drug Regimen Review of all residents that may be at risk for Digoxin toxicity and interaction and intervention;
 - Dec. 11, 2002 – nursing consultant conducted a change of condition in-service for the licensed and dietary staff;
- more -

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- Dec. 12, 2002 – two physicians were reassigned from residents care area;
- Dec. 17, 2002 – pharmacy consultant began re-training licensed staff for drug interaction; and
- Dec. 18, 19, 20, 2002 – a “Dietary Audit” of all residents was conducted.

“This Department and the Governor are committed to providing world class healthcare for our veterans. The Governor has directed me to proceed with whatever steps are necessary to correct inadequacies and improve all veterans healthcare facilities throughout the state,” commented Secretary Johannessen. “The citation presented at Barstow addresses a particular incident which is already being addressed as we move forward to improve the system statewide,” he added.

Last week the CDVA announced (press release January 30, 2003) an aggressive reorganization of its entire Veterans Homes Division ranging from headquarters in Sacramento to all three Homes in Barstow, Chula Vista and Yountville. These changes had begun prior to the citation by DHS. The Department, with the assistance of independent professional consultants, has been reviewing the operation of the Homes Division. They have targeted key areas in the management structure and quality healthcare practices and have already initiated changes to better improve the healthcare operations of its Homes.

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